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ЕВРОПЕЙСКА АСОЦИАЦИЯ НА СТАРШИТЕ БОЛНИЧНИ ЛЕКАРИ
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Info-Document :	**AEMH 12-086**
Title:	**Info: Crossborder Medical Prescriptions**
Author :	**European Commission Press Release**
Purpose :	**Info-documents disseminated by the AEMH European Liaison Office do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the AEMH and its Board. Info-documents are meant to inform, to raise awareness, to alert, to launch a debate, to incite taking action,.....**
Distribution :	**AEMH Member Delegations**
Date :	**Sent by e-mail 20 December 2012**

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 20 December 2012

Europe for patients: Common rules on medical prescriptions when travelling to another EU country

Today the Commission adopted pan-EU rules on a minimum list of elements to be included in a medical prescription taken by a patient travelling from one EU country to another. The provisions for a common way to identify the patient, the prescriber and the prescribed product, are to be put into national law by the Member States by 25 October 2013. Coordination of medical prescriptions for both medicinal products (pharmaceuticals) and medical devices will improve the authentication of cross-border prescriptions and translate into an estimated extra 200 000 prescriptions dispensed every year, benefiting patients and health authorities by avoiding delays, interruptions in treatment and extra costs.

Mr Tonio Borg, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, said: *"Last year, the Commission adopted legislation on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare. Today's adoption of a code of practice for cross-border prescriptions is an essential step in achieving the main goal of this legislation: ensuring that patients' rights to access good quality treatment across EU borders becomes a reality. These rules will help secure that patients travelling to another Member State get the medicine they need in the country where they are thanks to clear cross-border prescriptions".*

Solving real-life problems

Overall, the number of **cross-border prescriptions** is estimated to be low, **around 2,3 million per year** – which translates to between **0.02% and 0.04% of all prescriptions in the EU**. Nevertheless, for specific groups of patients, improving the recognition of cross-border prescriptions makes an important difference. For example, for patients with chronic diseases wishing to travel to another country, for patients living in border regions or smaller Member States for whom filling out a cross-border prescription is a necessity and for patients with a rare disease, where the best expertise can be found across a border.

With the current diversity of prescriptions across the EU, it is **estimated that over half of patients would have problems with their prescription** being recognised in another EU country.

Spokespersons' Service
Service des Porte-parole

IP/12/1422

The guidelines in practice

The new rules on Prescriptions take the form of an Implementing Directive. They introduce a **common set of descriptive elements to help identify prescribers, patients and prescribed products**. They do not, however, deal with the appearance, format or language of the prescription. Nor do they preclude further elements, in line with local practices, being added by prescribers. These **common elements are limited to cross-border prescriptions requested by the patient**, not prescriptions used within a country (unless a Member State so chooses).

National Contact Points, established under the Cross-border healthcare Directive will inform patients on the right to travel with a cross-border prescription when visiting another Member State as well as the minimum list of elements that it should contain.

For more information on cross-border healthcare, including prescriptions:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/cross_border_care/policy/index_en.htm

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